



BIRCH INTERIORS

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BIRCH INTERIORS

**A book of Information
upon Birch for the use of
architects and builders**

Published by

**The Rotary Birch Club, Oshkosh, Wis.
The Northern Hemlock and Hardwood
Manufacturers Association,
Oshkosh, Wisconsin**



One of the best features of the modern home is a sun parlor or screened porch. This view shows a glazed partition with double glazed doors between porch and living room. Birch trim of simple pattern is appropriate.

THE WOOD

Birch trees are common in the Northern woods from Maine to Minnesota, and wherever found they are among the most striking and beautiful inhabitants of the forest. The Yellow Birch (*Betula Lutea*) which is the chief source of Birch lumber, reaches its perfection in Wisconsin and Michigan, and more than one-half of the total cut of Birch is manufactured in these two states. It is a well known fact that the individuals of a species attain their best development in the regions where that species is most abundant. For this reason Birch lumber and veneer from Wisconsin and Michigan are of the highest quality. The trees are large, symmetrical, clear, and sound. A height of 80 feet and a diameter of 30 inches is not uncommon. Timber of this sort yields a finishing wood which has no superiors, and few competitors.

Birch is close-grained and heavy. In bending and crushing strength, stiffness, toughness, and hardness, it ranks above many hardwoods and stands with beech, hard maple, and oak—woods whose qualities in these respects are universally appreciated. It is the close, interwoven structure of Birch that gives this wood its strength, density, wear-resisting, and stain-holding qualities.

The sapwood of Yellow Birch is yellowish, the heartwood light to dark reddish brown. It is the heartwood that furnishes the beautiful Red Birch which is a favorite wherever known. Both sapwood and heartwood take a brilliant, satiny polish. The figure of curly Birch is especially attractive, while the sparkling lustre of the finished wood gives a richness of tone such as is usually looked for only in the costliest imported woods.

The exact size of the figure of quarter sawed curly Birch is shown on the title page of this book, (page 1) while the beautiful effects of curly Birch which are characteristic are shown on pages 26 and 30.

Uses of Birch

More than half of the total output of Birch is used in the manufacture of furniture and fixtures, and for mill-work. The latter includes all kinds of interior finish, veneered doors and high grade flooring. In fact, it is in the field of interior finish that Birch finds its highest and most appropriate use. Employed originally as a substitute for mahogany, Birch is now appreciated for many sterling qualities of its own, some of which are not possessed by mahogany.

Trim—

There are as many styles of Birch trim as there are designers who wish to produce an unusual or particularly appropriate effect. On page 39 are shown 24 kinds of Birch moulding, casing and base, that are only a few examples along this line, while in the field of grille and stair-work the variety is even greater. The modern preference is for the simpler styles which offer the fewest possible angles and corners to collect dust and at the same time give the largest uninterrupted surface to display the figure and sheen of the wood itself. For the same reason, we prefer the softer hued stains which bring out the qualities of the wood in harmonious fashion, rather than the more brilliant colors, or paints which completely obscure the natural beauty of the wood. We paint iron and brick for protective reasons as well as to give a more pleasing effect. When we work with wood it should be our purpose to enhance and not obscure its characteristics of figure, color and grain.

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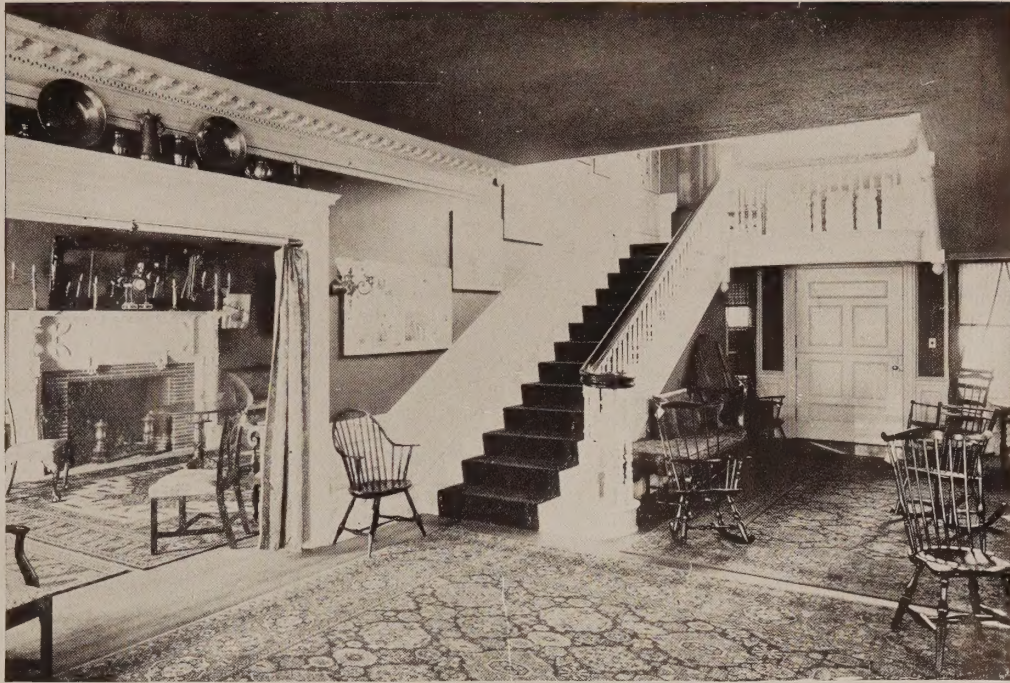
Halls and Stairways



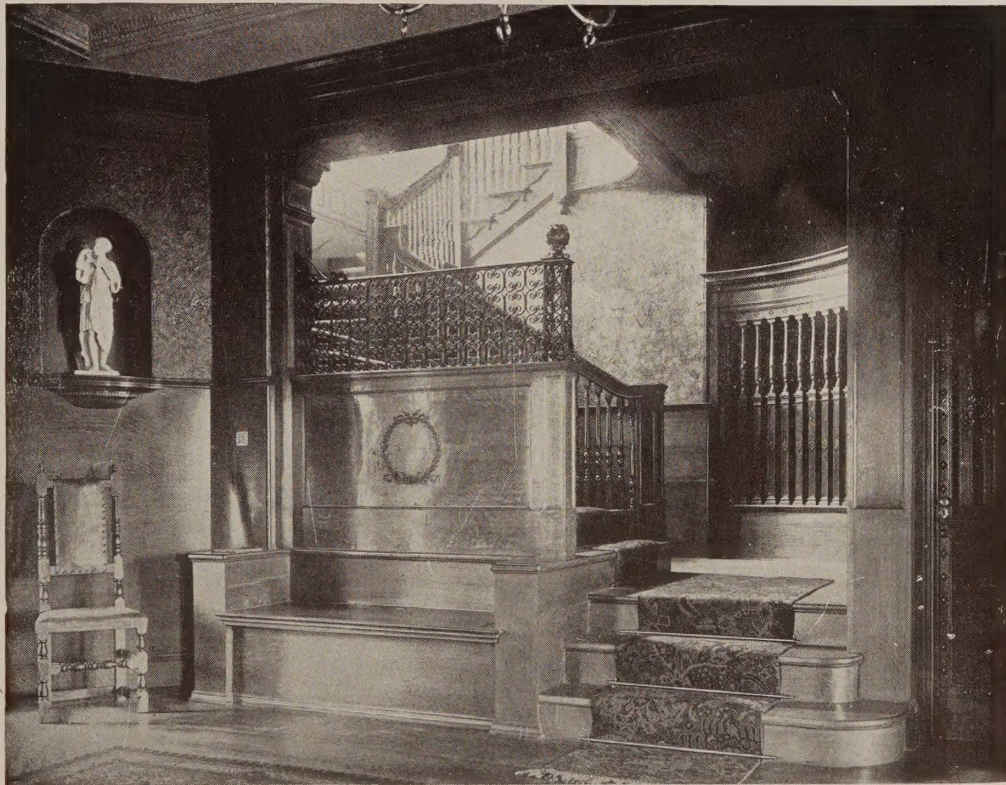
An interesting use of art glass is a modern entrance finished in Birch.



A hall and stairway finished in Birch-Mahogany.



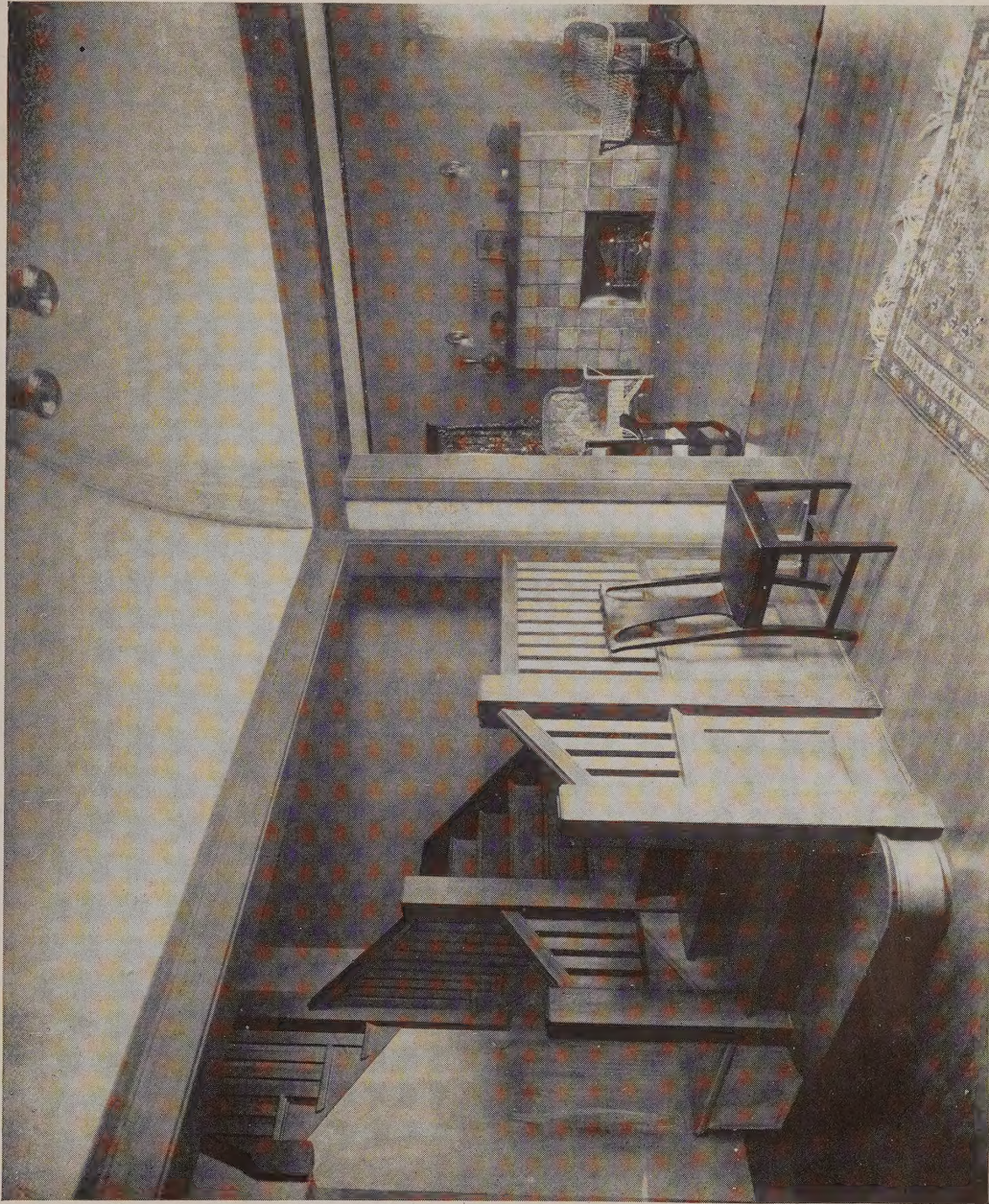
Fine old colonial hall. Unselected Birch for the white enamel and red Birch for the rail and floor are appropriate.



Good architectural treatment of plain, highly polished Birch woodwork with open spindles and decorative screen of wrought iron.



A good interior for Birch. Corner built-in book cases with leaded glass doors help to form an attractive doorway. Head casing is continuous around the room. Heavy wood cornice moulding is used.

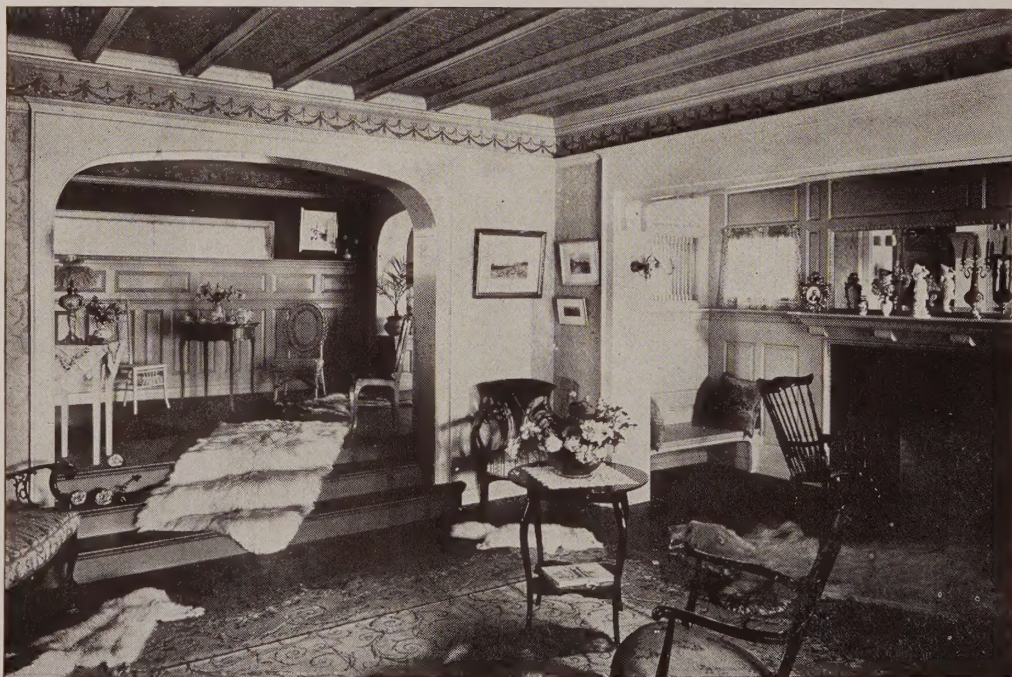


A silver gray Birch trim with natural red Birch floor is effective here.

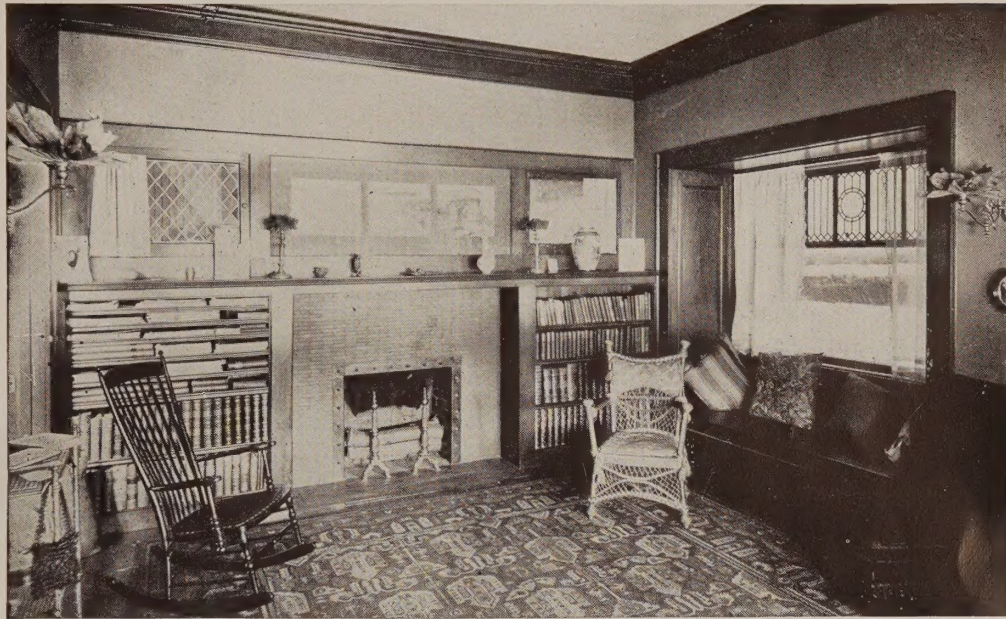
Living Rooms



Birch trim and red Birch floor are very appropriate here. The wide openings increase the spacious effect.



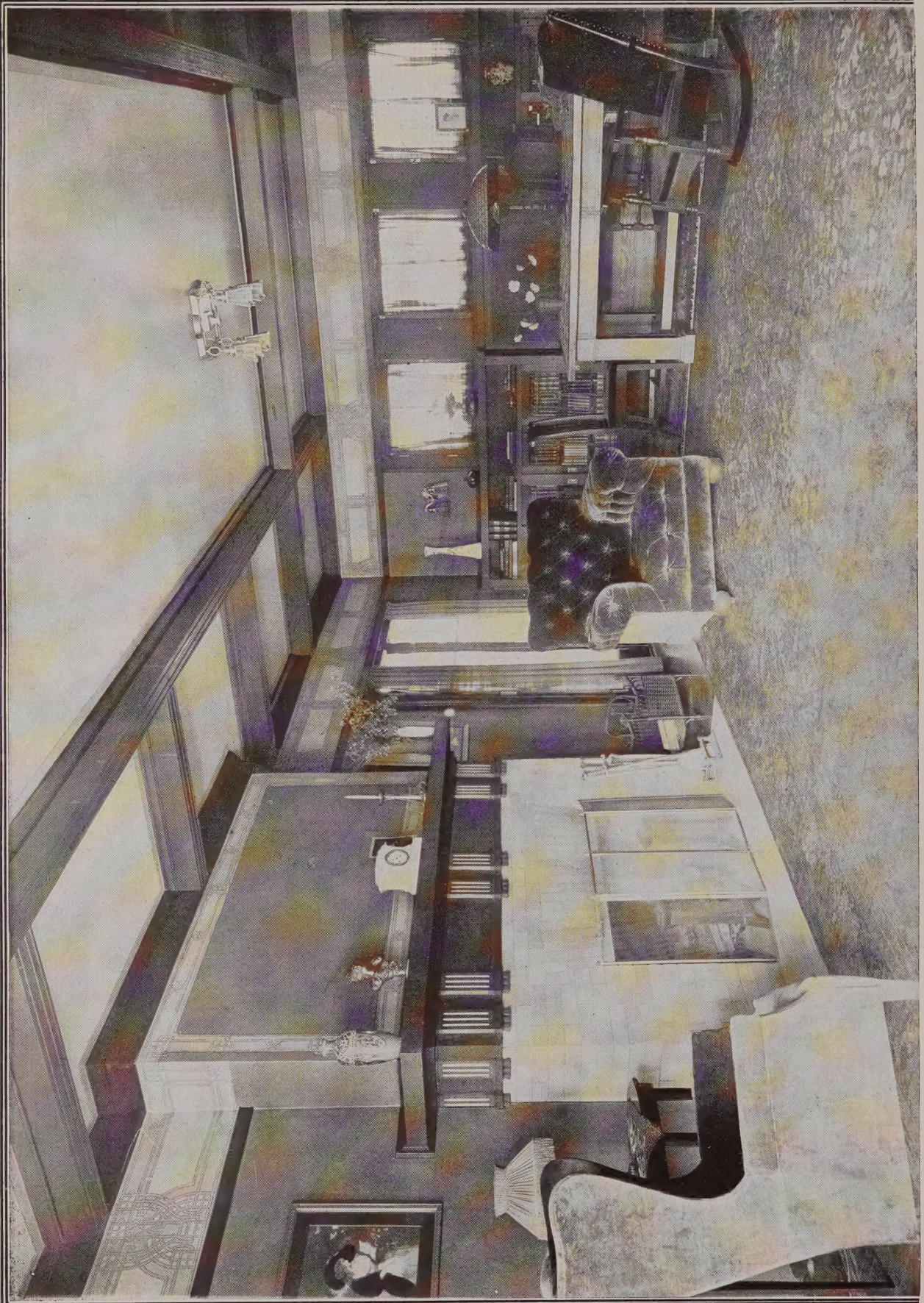
A charming use of broken floor levels in this dainty drawing room. White woodwork, white and mahogany furniture.



Dutch tiles framed by the woodwork form over-mantel. The treatment carried across to panel latticed casements over bookcases.



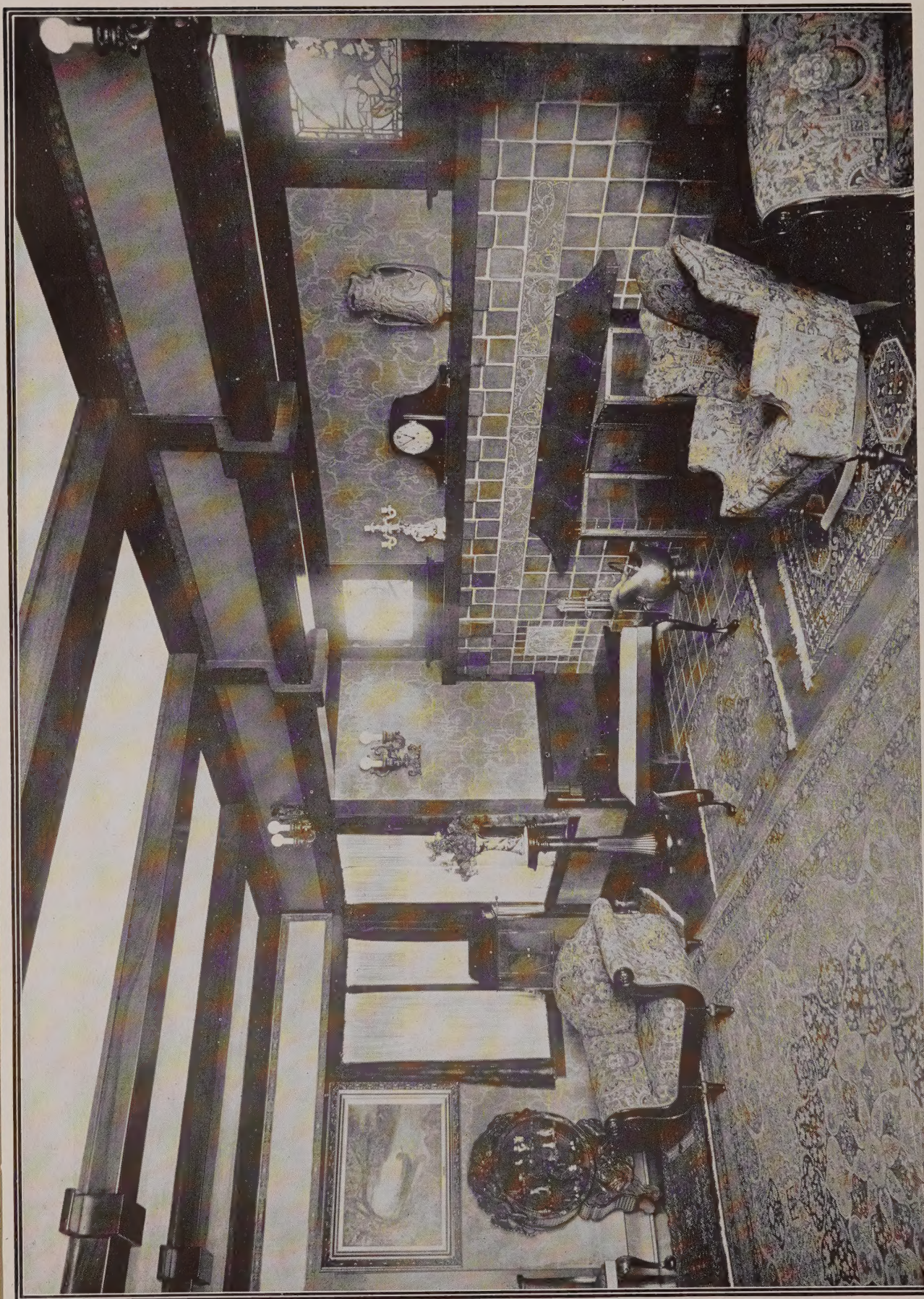
White woodwork, old blue wall tapestry paper and mahogany furniture.



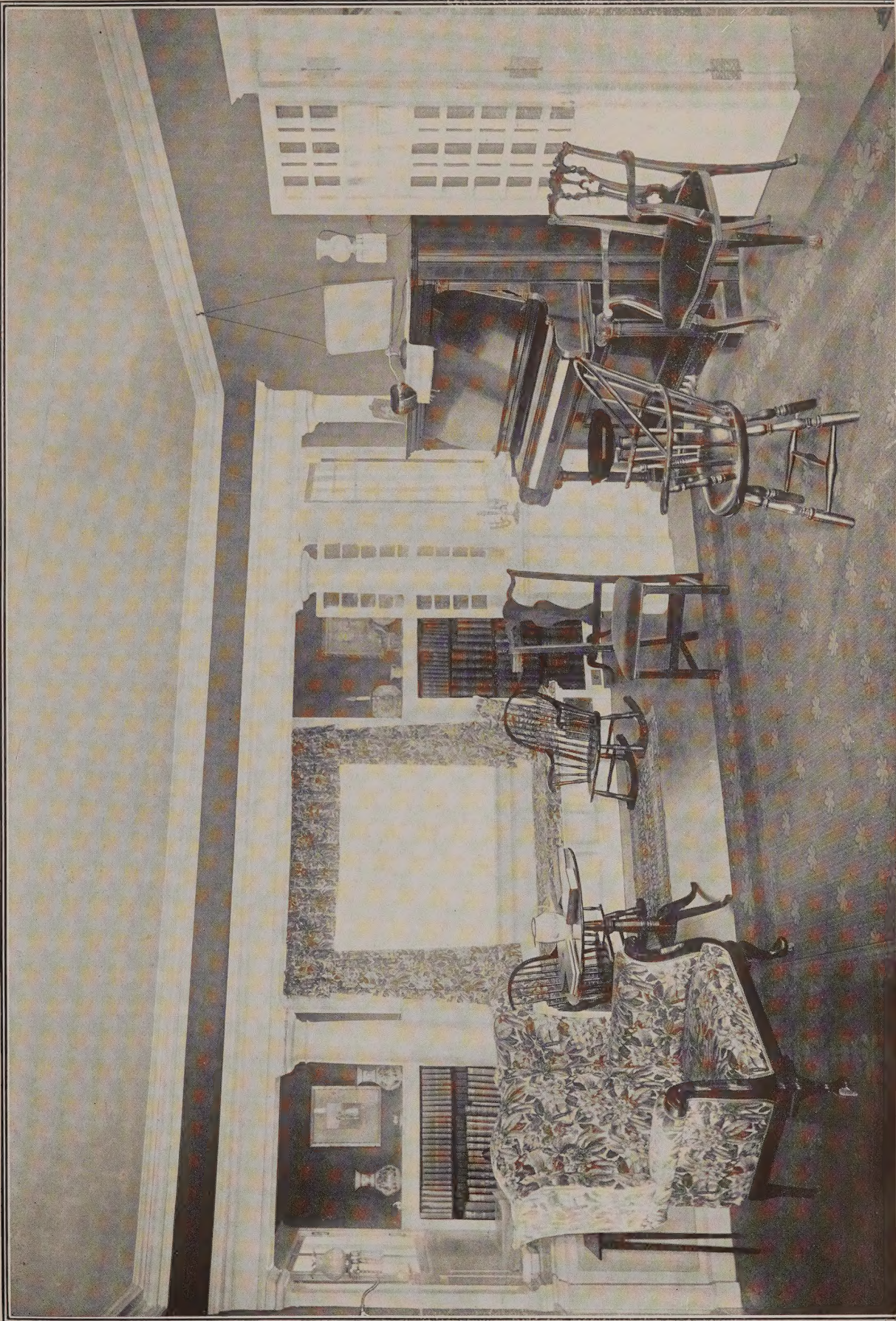
Large living room, with everything comfortable and usable. The ceiling beams produce a warm and cozy effect. Note the high casement windows at the end of this room with bookcases and seat built-in underneath. Full length French windows open to a screened porch. Side walls are tinted gold and brown and ornamental border is carried in stencil work. Birch can be used throughout with the best of results.



Finished in white enamel. Broad upholstered seat across the end of the room, with radiator underneath. Open book shelves are built into each corner of the room at the ends of the seat. Mantel and ceiling beams in Colonial style. The shallow electric light globes under the ceiling beams make a unique lighting arrangement.



A living room of unusual beauty and richness. The fireplace and mantel fill the entire end of the room. There is a built-in settle in each chimney corner. A novelty in beam ceiling treatment is the heavy stirrups that seem to support the beams.



Wide-open homes are the thing these days. Here is a library and music-room separated by a colonnade with table-height side rails. Birch white enamel finish and red Birch floors are appropriate.



(Courtesy, Building Age)

An attractive living room with Birch trim and built-in book-cases.

Panels—

The perfecting of veneering processes, and especially of rotary cut veneer, enables us to get, at a reasonable price, a combination of large sizes and beautiful figures in panels that would be altogether impossible were we restricted to solid lumber. Moreover, the well built up panel is stronger and much less likely to warp or check than is a solid piece of wood of the same, or even much greater thickness. Veneered panels may be obtained in almost any size desired, and where appropriate they provide a wonderfully effective means of interior finishing.

The border design in this book shows the figure of unselected rotary cut Birch veneer in natural size.

Doors—

Recent years have seen a great advance in the manufacture of artistic doors, which are at the same time simple in design and reasonable in price. Here again, progress has been made by the use of veneer. There are many styles of doors to choose from. One of the most pleasing is a single panel Birch door stained silver gray, but other styles have many admirers.

Floors—

Among the most useful developments of modern lumber manufacturing is the production of high grade hardwood flooring. This flooring is manufactured to exact sizes from selected, thoroughly seasoned stock, and is as carefully handled as is interior finish. In fact, a beautiful and durable hardwood floor is an important part of the inside of a building, now that rugs have so largely replaced carpets.

Wherever a particularly rich effect is desired to harmonize with finish and furnishing, nothing is superior to a selected Red Birch floor. It is as strong as maple, sufficiently hard to stand service, and of unusual beauty of figure and color. Such a floor finished natural is not out of place in the most palatial structure. Birch flooring is manufactured and graded under the rules of the Maple Flooring Manufacturers Association, and it is a high class standard product in respect to widths, thickness, and quality.

Built-in Work—

The demand for conveniences and economy of space has resulted in a wide variety of built-in-work all the way from kitchen to bed room. Built-in book cases, china closets, sideboards and wardrobes are considered among the necessities of the modern residence. For them no wood is superior to Birch. In addition to its desirable qualities of figure and color, Birch looks well and fulfills every requirement of a high-grade cabinet wood. There are many kinds of built-in work of Birch that harmonize perfectly with finish and furniture which are also the ultimate of convenience and utility.

Furniture—

Large quantities of Birch have for many years gone into furniture factories to emerge as mahogany. The only fault to be found with this is that Birch has not received the popular approval it would if the furniture had been generally known to be Birch. It is more desirable to purchase useful democratic material under whatever name it comes than to have an imitation of an aristocrat. Birch has the qualities required of the best furniture woods and more of it is used for parlor furniture frames than any other wood. Every argument in favor of Birch for interior finish applies equally well to Birch for furniture and there is the added one of harmony between finish and furnishing.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 27)

Dining Rooms



Dining room and furniture designed by Sylvanus B. Marston, architect. Birch would be very appropriate here.



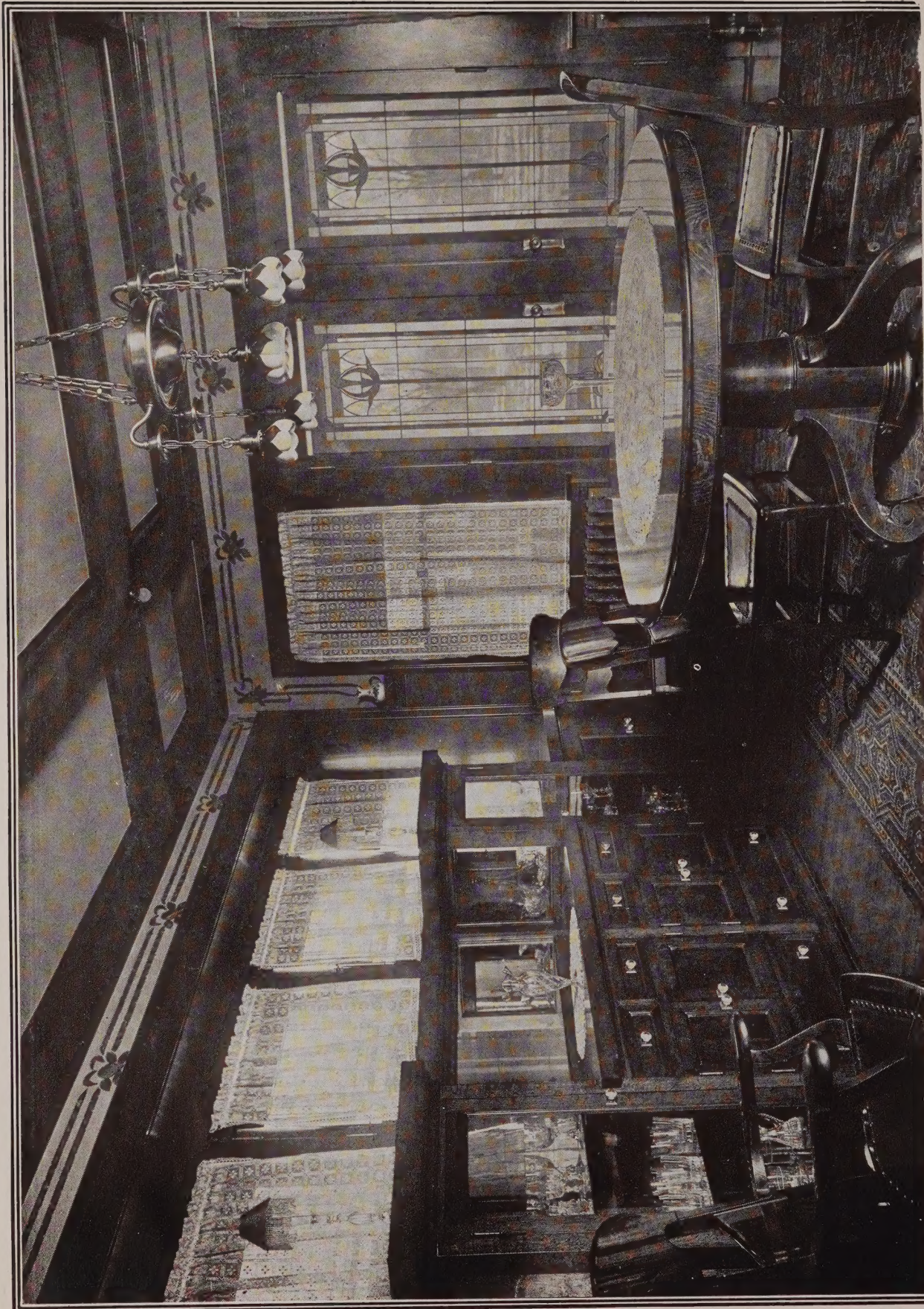
Chimney breast and cornice elaborately treated. Built-in china closets on either side of opening. White woodwork, rich red walls and portiere making a striking room.



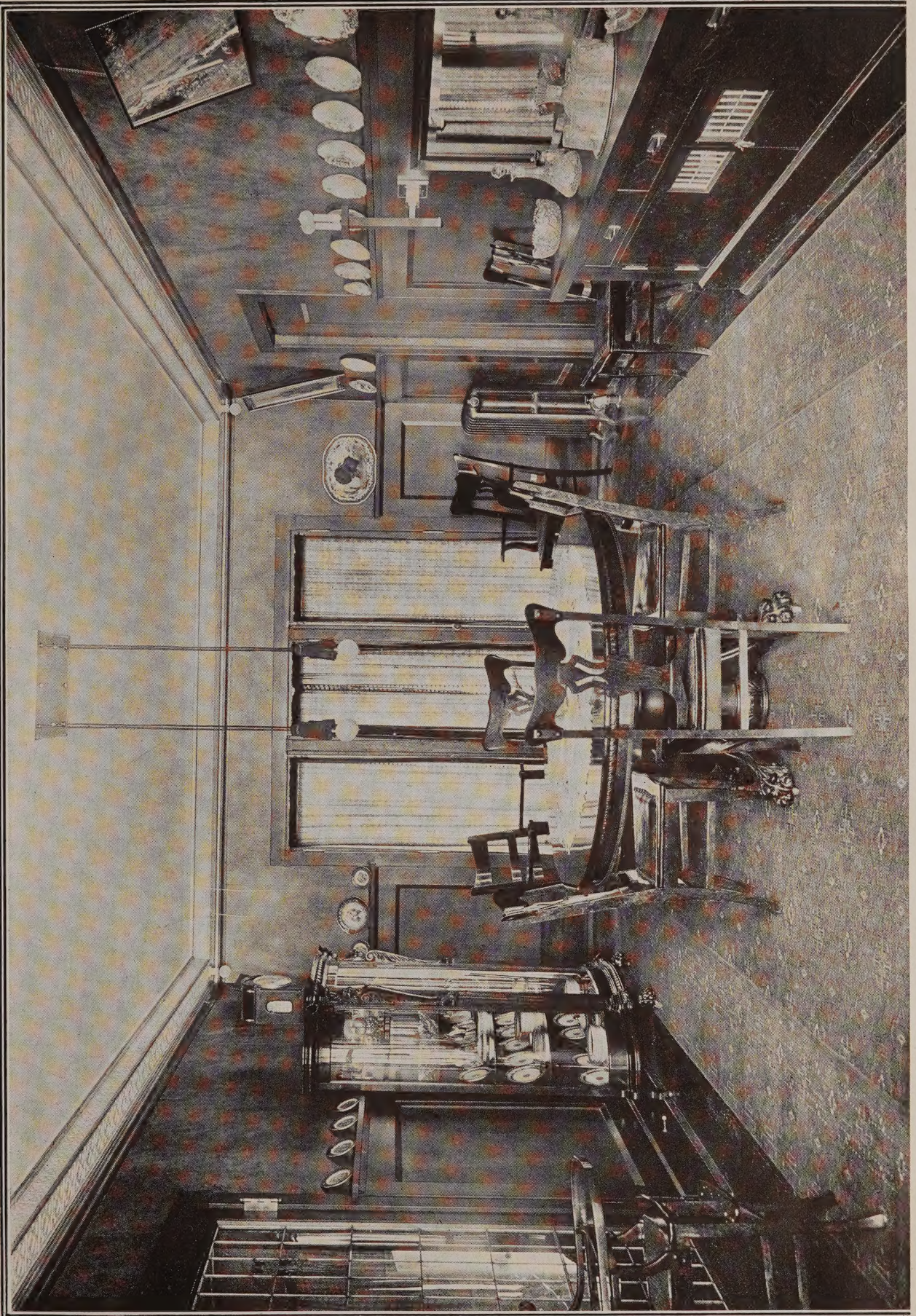
High wood paneling and heavy moulding with tinted plaster wall and ceiling.



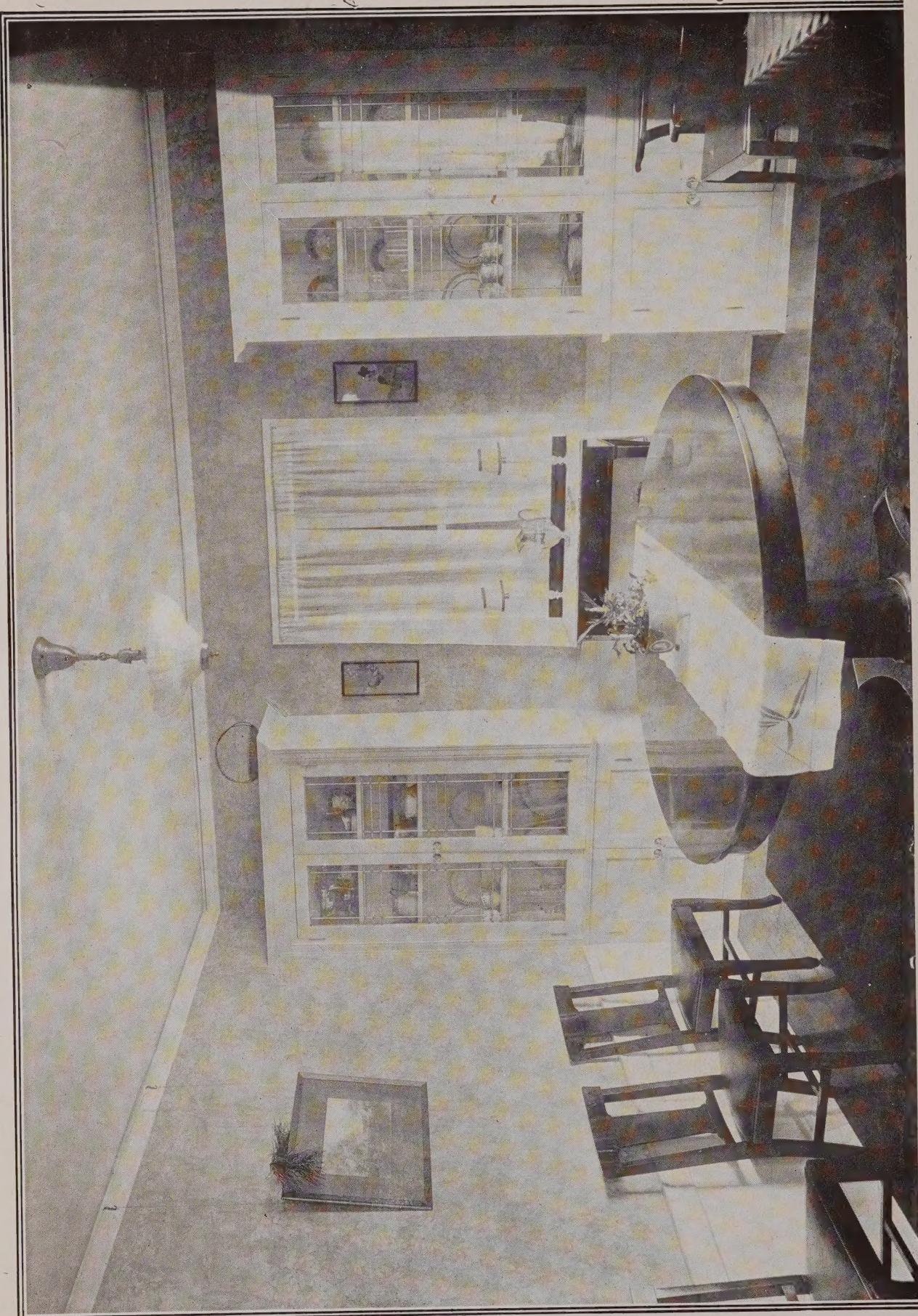
Birch mahogany-finished woodwork and furniture. Frieze, a design of thistles in natural coloring done in free hand fresco.



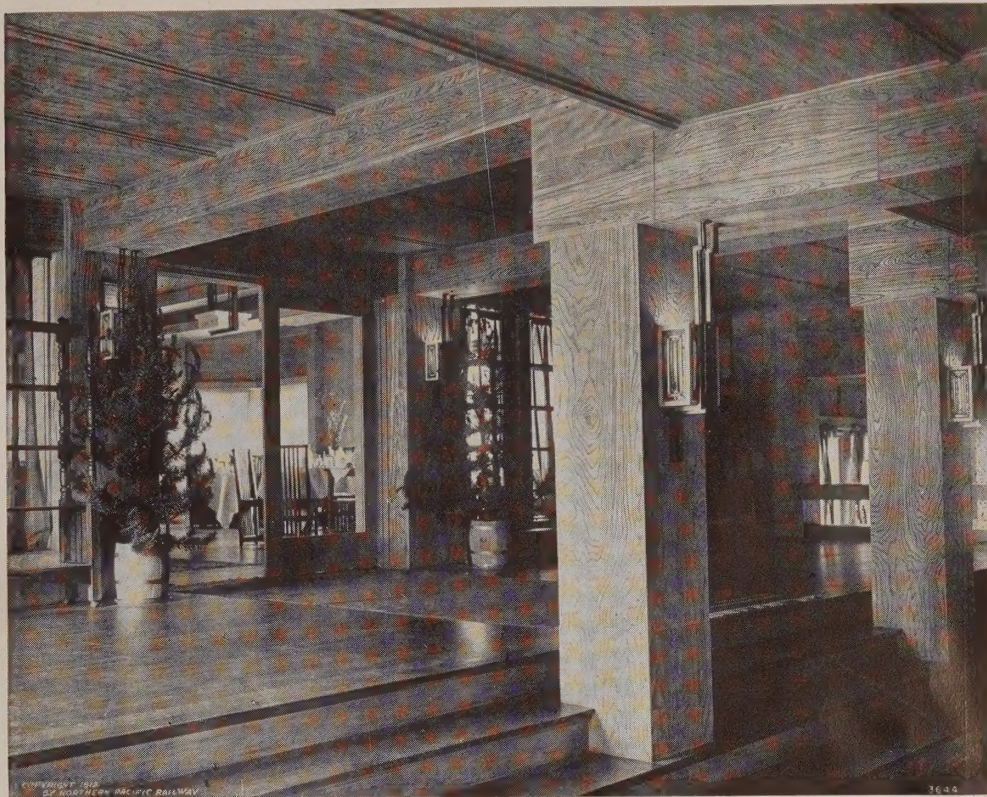
This dining room has its share of light and sunshine—one side opens upon a porch with double full-length glazed doors, and other side is practically all windows. Above the buffet are inward opening casements and at each end are larger ones. Birch woodwork is appropriate throughout.



A large, light and beautifully finished dining room. Side walls are paneled up to the plate rail with Birch veneer. The sideboard of massive design is built-in.



A dining room with white enamel trim, wainscoting and china cabinets.



Entrance to dining room, Grand Canyon Hotel, Yellowstone National Park.
Finished in Birch throughout.



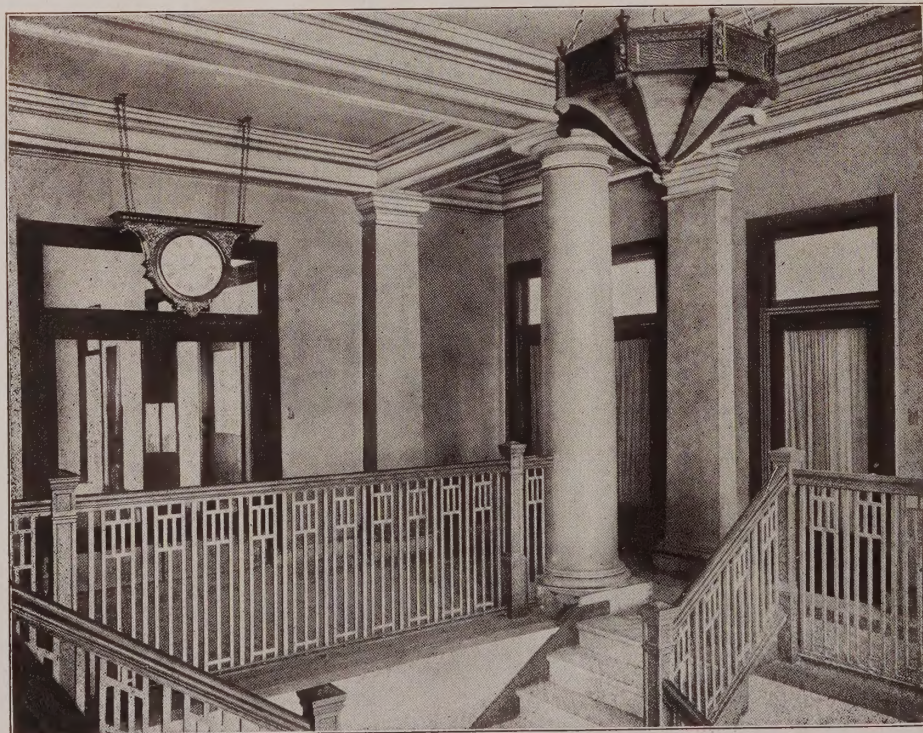
Heavy moulding, built-in china cabinet and unusual fireplace design.

Varied Uses of Birch

Birch is wear-resistant and sanitary. For this reason it is used in hundreds of apartments, stores, office buildings and hospitals throughout the United States and Canada.



Birch finished store in Jenkins Arcade Building, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Birch doors and trim in the Milwaukee hospital.

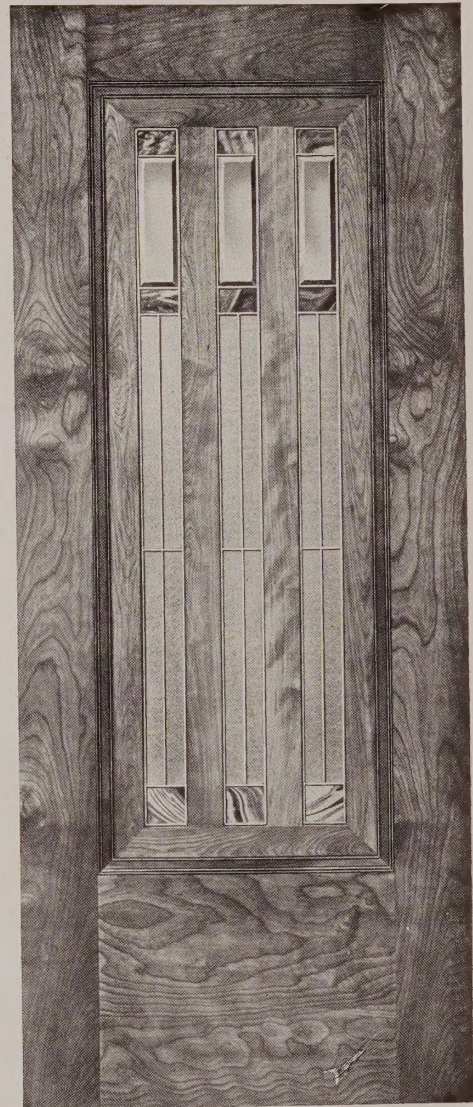


Four casement windows curtained as a whole with brightly figured chintz. Inner draw curtains of silk complete the drapery.

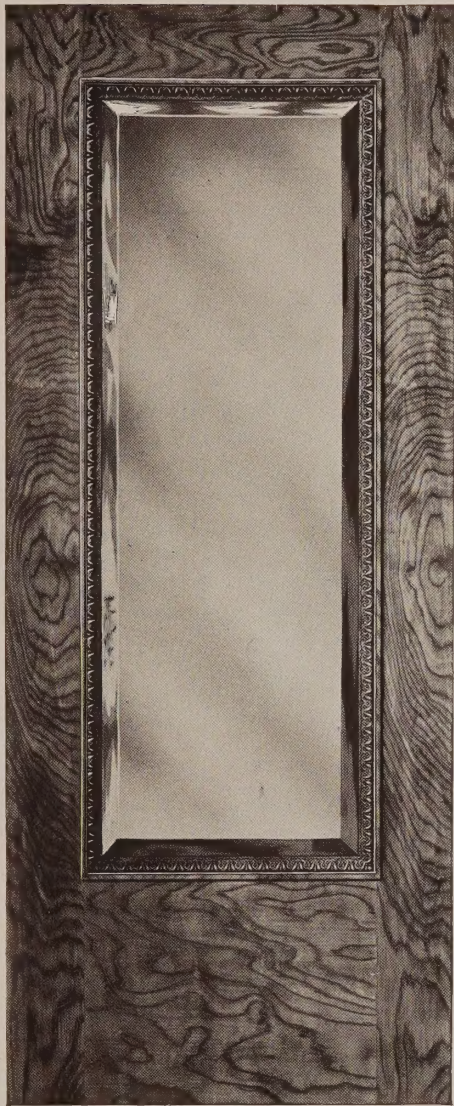


A cosy built-in window seat flanked by open book shelves. The seat is upholstered with loose cushion and the curtains are flowered scrim.

Birch Doors



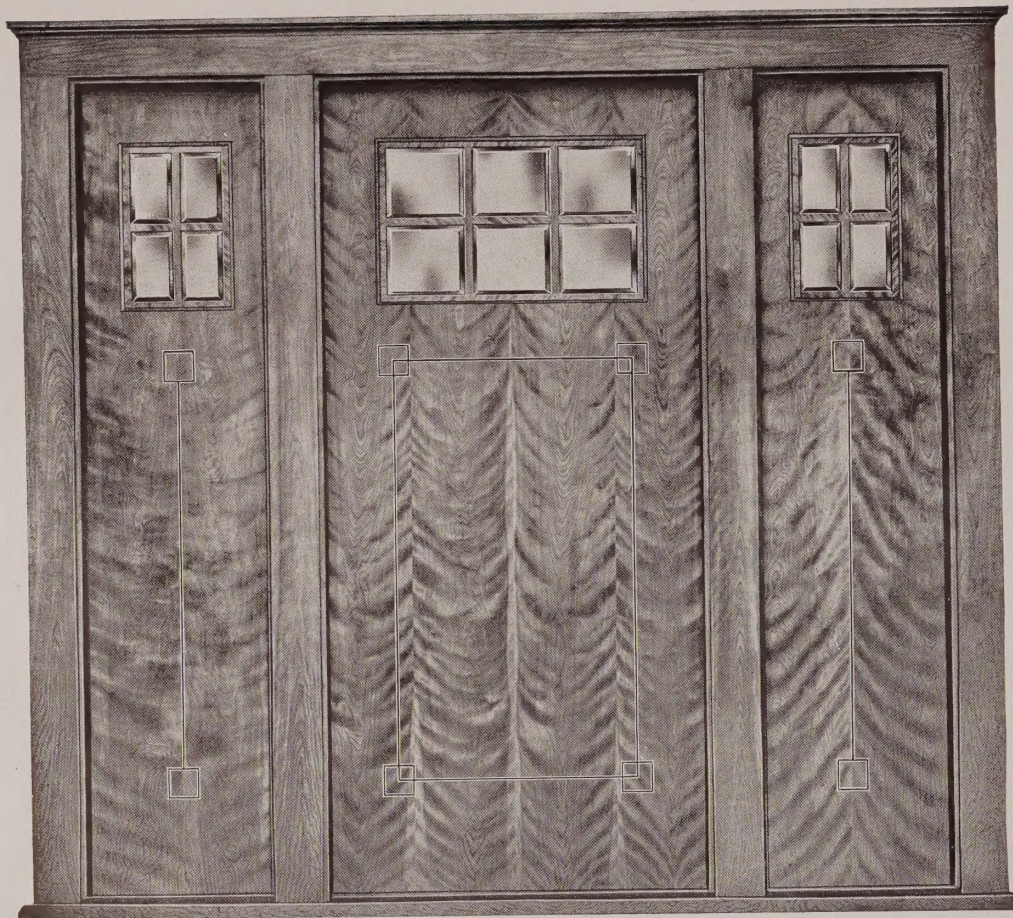
The cuts on these pages are faithful reproductions of a few of the many original and beautiful designs of Birch veneered doors supplied by a manufacturer whose use of Birch has done much to make the merits of the wood more justly appreciated.



Birch Doors



An especially rich effect is produced by using an inlay of White Holly and Ebony in a Birch door of the "Sanitary" type.



An "Artercraft" entrance of curly Birch.



A beautiful living porch. (Courtesy, Western Architect.)

Stains

There are so many cases in which good wood has been spoiled by poor stains that this subject deserves careful study. When one goes to the expense of getting the best wood there is for interior finish, he should see that it is properly and appropriately stained.

Reliable stains of nearly any shade desired may be purchased in shape for applying. Samples and color schemes are freely supplied by the manufacturers. Care should be exercised, however, to make sure that the stains selected are of tested quality. Care should also be exercised to have the wood thoroughly seasoned, surfaced and cleaned before applying the stain. Since Birch is a close-grained wood, a paste filler is not necessary.

Stains are designated as spirit, oil, or water stains, according as the medium in which the color is held in solution is alcohol, oil, or acid. Spirit stains are not recommended for Birch since the alcohol evaporates so rapidly that it is difficult to apply uniformly. Oil stains give splendid effects, but not as clear and transparent colors as are produced with water stains. Water or acid stains are evenly and quickly applied and permit any method of finishing over them. The objection that water stains sometimes raise the grain of the wood is averted by sponging the wood with clear water and sanding it smooth before applying the stain.

Varnish magnifies the natural appearance of the wood, hence defects as well as natural beauty are also magnified. This makes it especially important to have the surface smooth and free from defect, dirt, and dust before the varnish is put on. Varnish works best at a temperature of about 70 degrees and in a dry atmosphere.

Rubbed, or rubbed and polished finishes give the best results with Birch. For example, an excellent silver gray may be produced on Birch by one coat of acid stain followed by sand papering, finished with one coat each of white shellac and wax and then rubbed. There are also some flat finishes that are satisfactory for certain purposes. The user of Birch should always remember, however, that he is handling a high-class, hard wood whose peculiar richness of tone and figure is worthy of his most painstaking efforts.

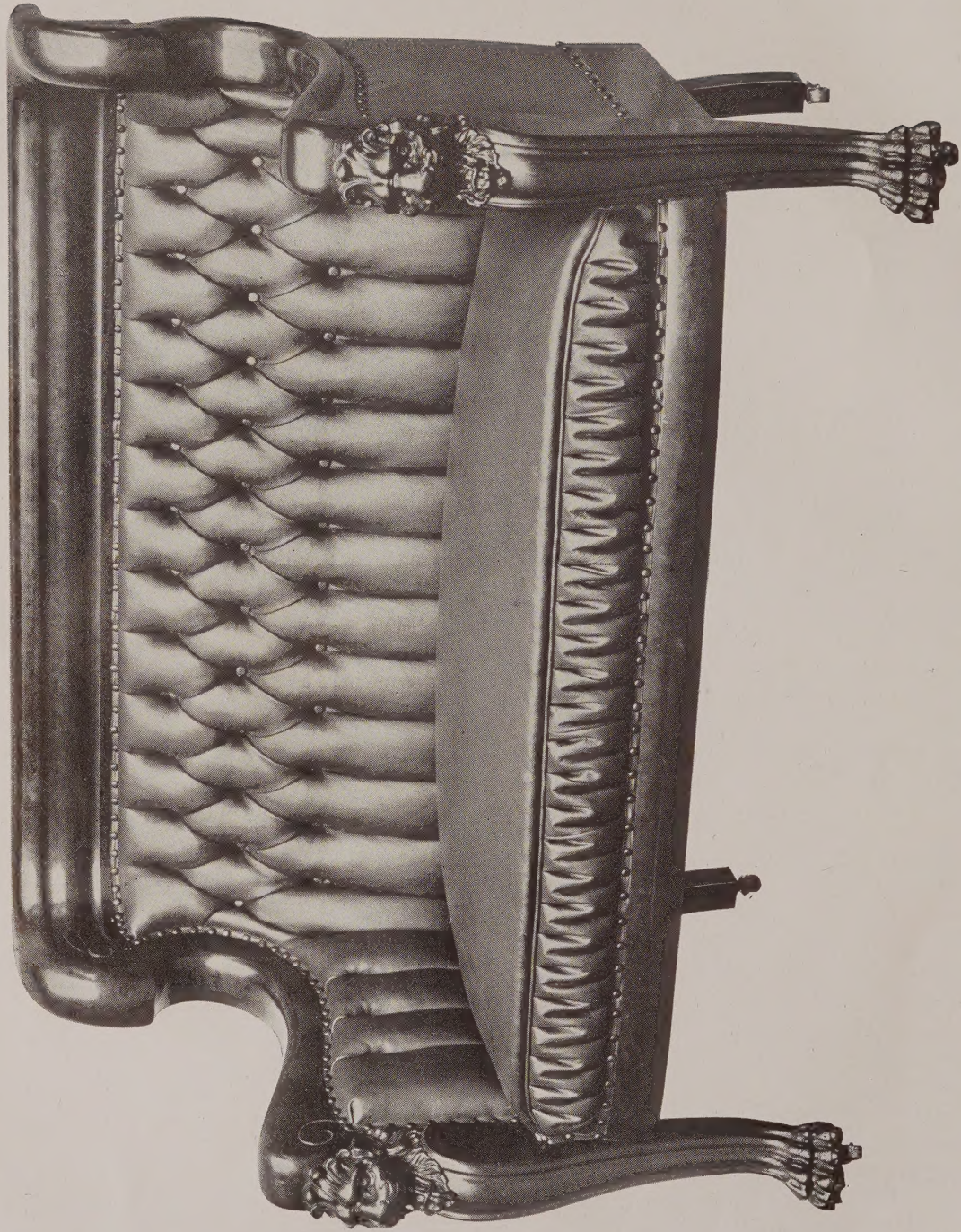
Birch is also just the right density and texture to form a superior base for white enamel, and it is largely used for this purpose.

The Adaptability of Birch

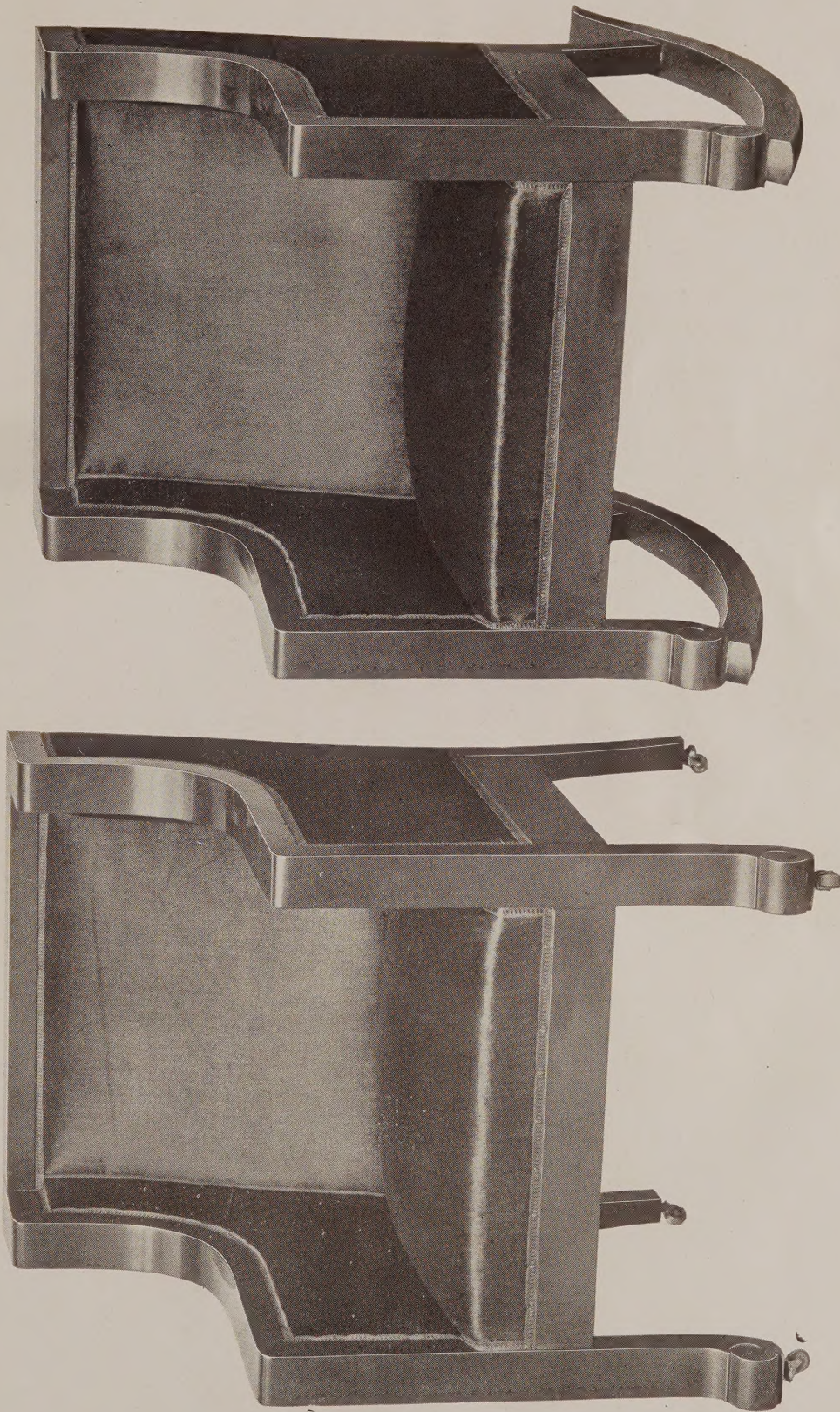
Birch is of proven worth for such hard service as store counters, show cases, and fixtures, while its merits make it just as appropriate for the trim of the finest residences, apartments, offices and hotels. Moreover, the reasonable cost of Birch places it easily within the reach of the builder of the modest cottage or bungalow. The colonial hall and stairway in white enamel, the living room in silver gray, the dining room in one of the many shades of brown, the bed room in white enamel or natural, the den to suit the owner's particular fancy—all offer suitable opportunities for the use of Birch. Among the stains which give the best effect on Birch are shades of silver gray, walnut, fumed oak, natural and mission brown. These are colors which harmonize well with general schemes of decoration, and are not likely to get on anybody's nerves. However, there is no quarrel with the user of Birch who prefers an entirely different selection. The wood will take and hold permanently any stain of the right kind that is properly applied.

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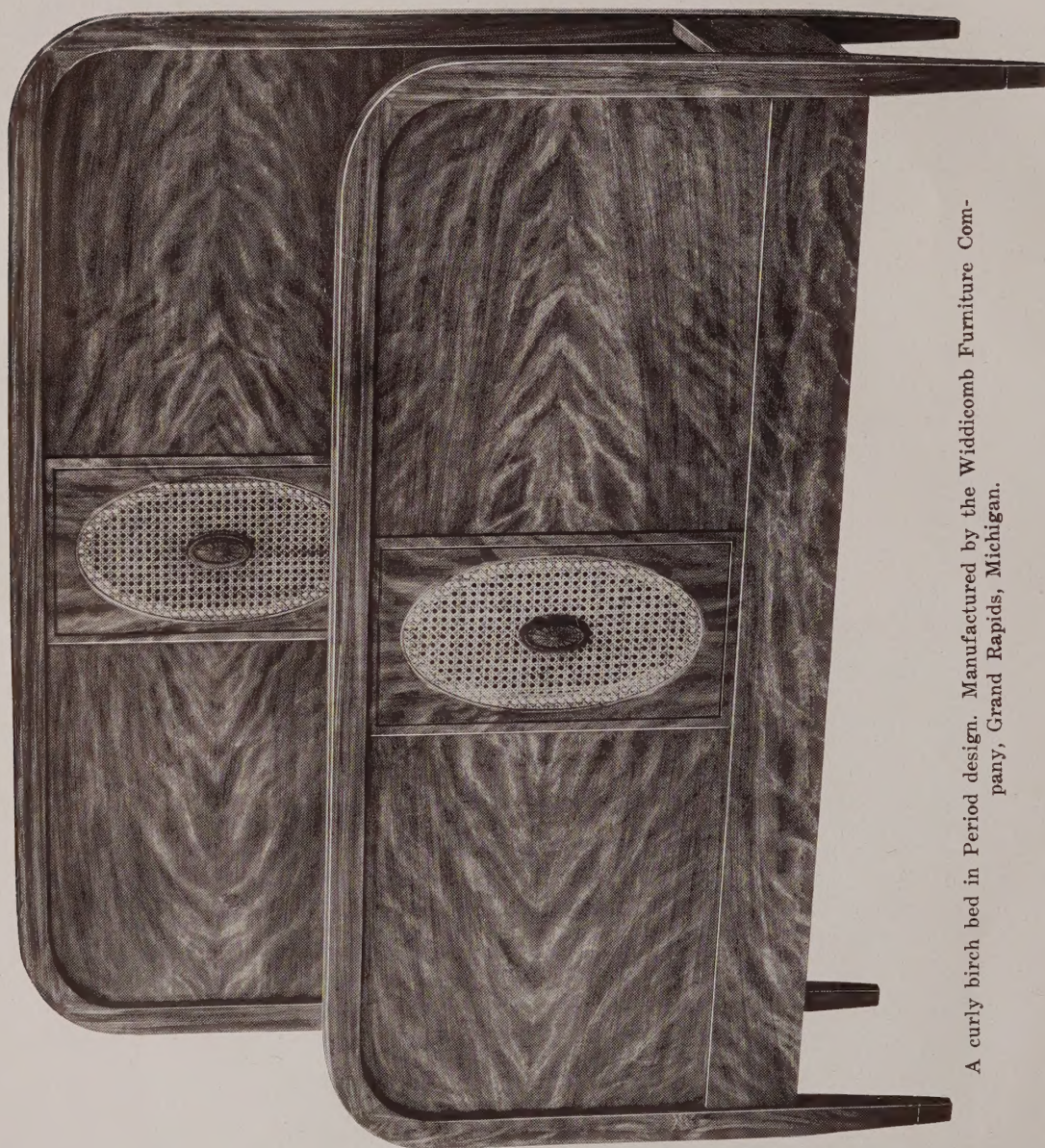
Birch Furniture



Solid Birch upholstered furniture.



Manufactured by Hollatz Brothers, Chicago.



A curly birch bed in Period design. Manufactured by the Widdicomb Furniture Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

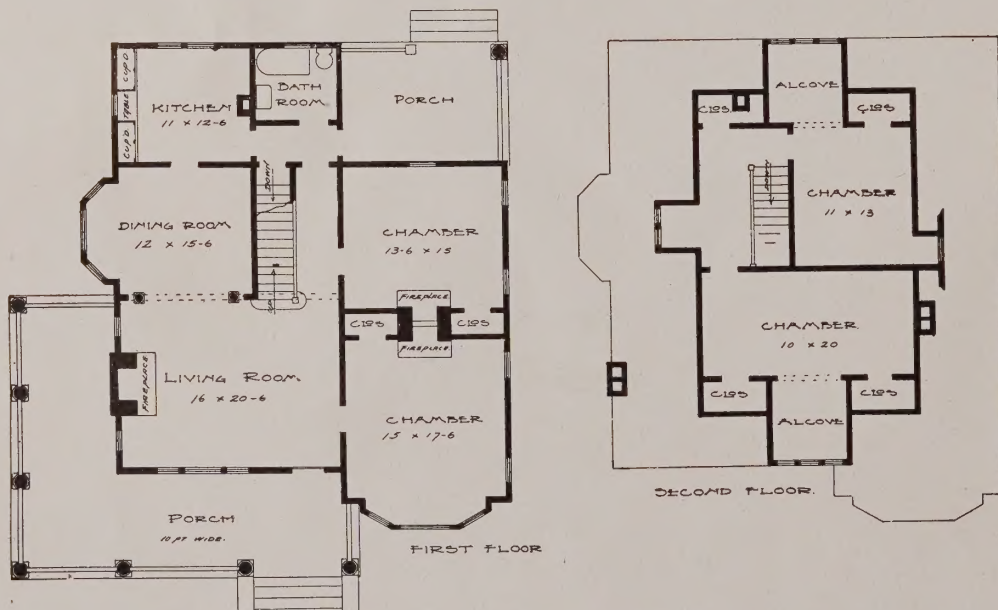


A bed room of restful simplicity. The finish is all white enamel, Doors, Birch-Mahogany with glass knobs; electric lighting fixtures resemble antique candlesticks. Double French windows open upon a balcony.

Birch Finished Residences



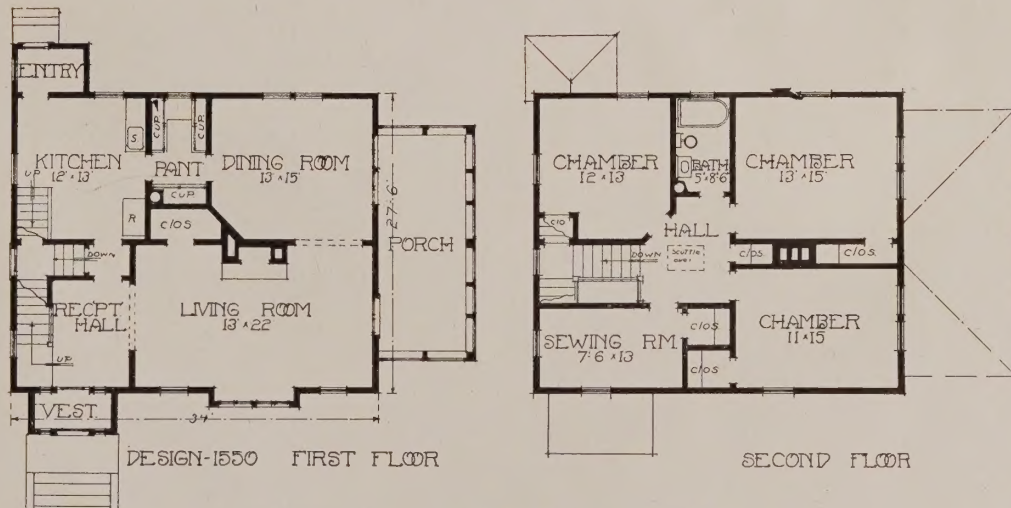
A roomy cottage. Attractively finished in Birch.



(Designed by M. L. Keith, Minneapolis, Minn.)



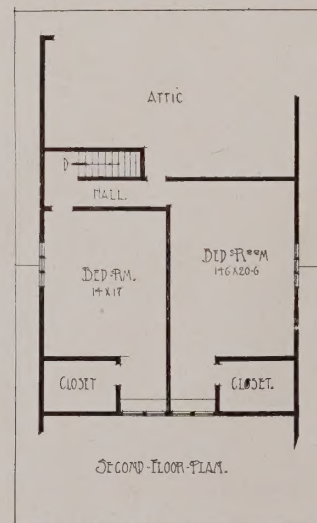
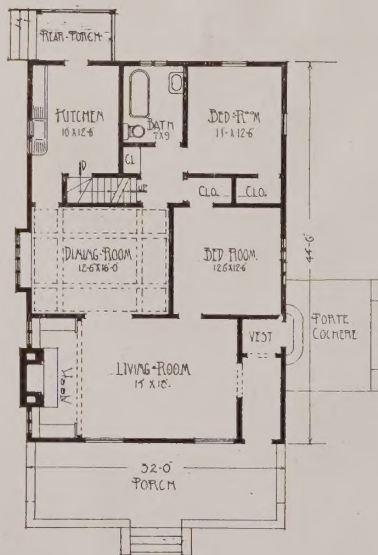
A shingled cottage. Roof stained moss green, sides deep brown with white trim.
Birch interior finish.



(Designed by M. L. Keith, Minneapolis, Minn.)



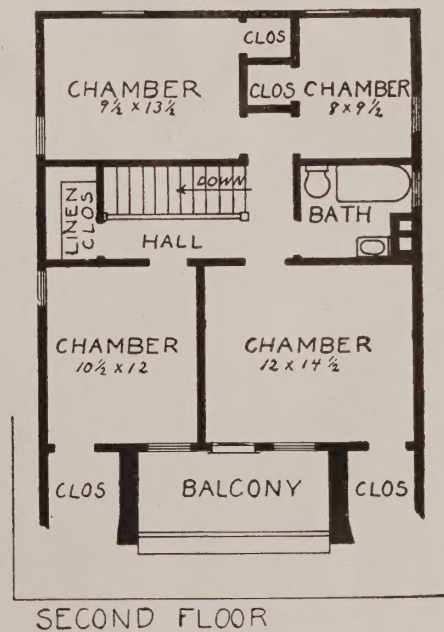
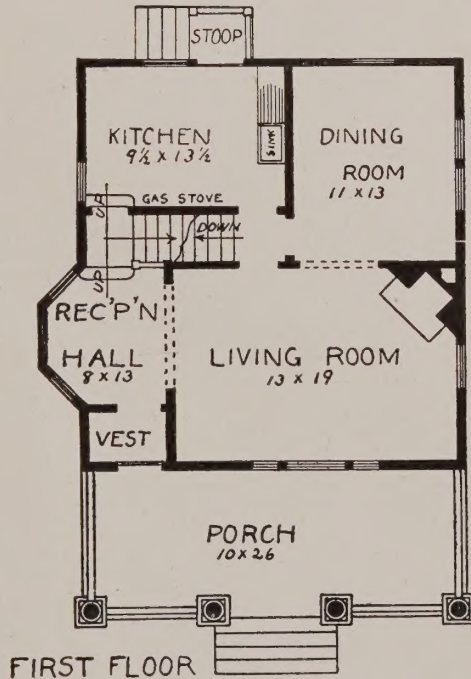
Small cottage with cobblestone porch and chimney. Birch finish in grays and browns will be pleasing.



(Designed by M. L. Keith, Minneapolis, Minn.)

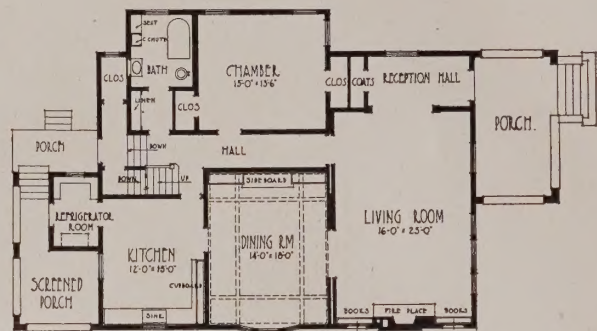


A popular style of cottage suited to a small lot. Birch doors and trim add to the cozy, home-like effect.

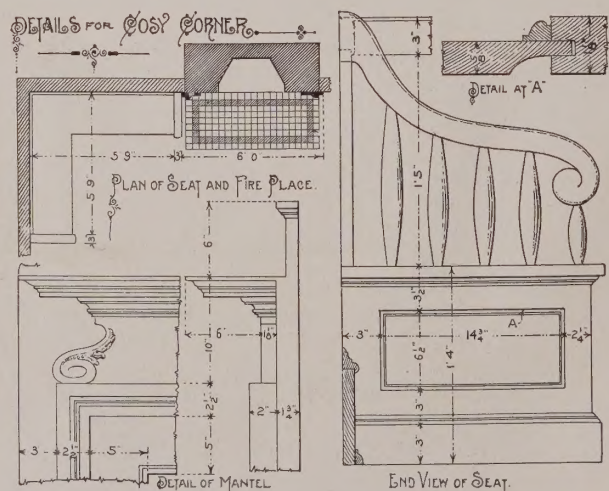


(Designed by M. L. Keith, Minneapolis, Minn.)

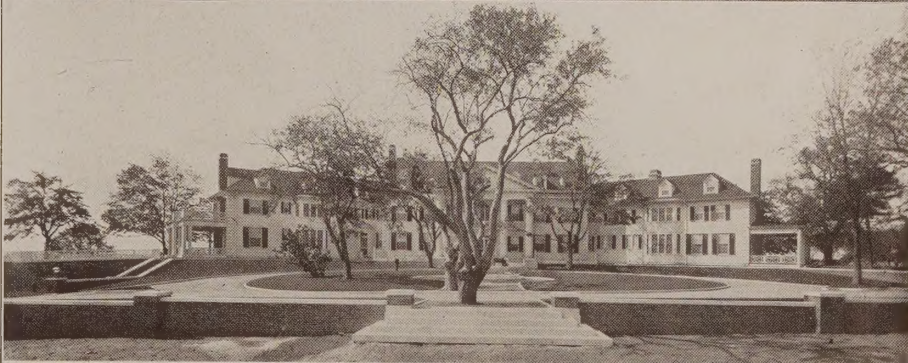
Birch trim and built-in work is used most effectively in this comfortable cottage



A Birch Cosy Corner



Birch trim is used in these beautiful residences

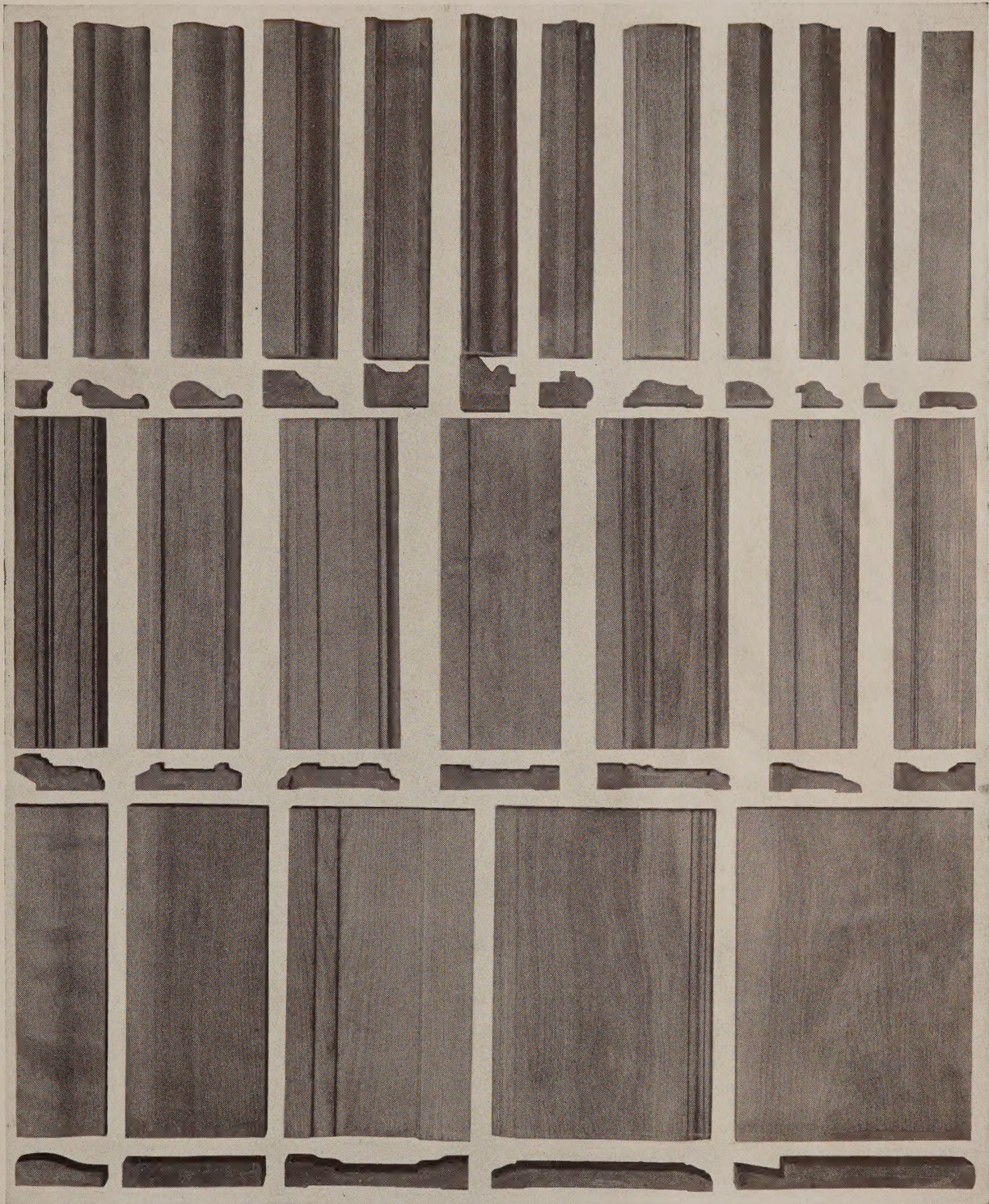


State Bank Building, Little Rock, Ark.



Finished with Birch.

Birch Trim



A few of the many styles of Birch moulding, casing and base.

Combinations With Other Woods—

One of the best features of Birch is that it works so well with other woods. There are excellent combinations of maple or oak floors with Birch trim, and of Birch veneered doors with a trim of other woods or white enamel. The user of Birch can secure an unusually wide range of effects.

Where Birch is Used

It is evidence enough of the qualities of Birch and its popularity with architects to say that it is used in such apartment buildings as the Alabama in Washington, D. C., the Esplanada in Baltimore, the Rossonian in Fort Worth, the Collinwood in Kansas City, and the Perry in Ogden, Utah; in hotels like the Fort Pitt in Pittsburgh, the Ansley in Atlanta, the New Willard in Washington, the Seminole in Jacksonville, the Chickasaw in Memphis, the Claypool in Indianapolis, the Congress in Chicago, the Grunewald in New Orleans, the Grand Canyon in Yellowstone Park, the Frye in Seattle, the Multnomah in Portland, the Palace and St. Francis in San Francisco, the Alexandria in Los Angeles, and the Grant in San Diego; in office buildings like the Diamond Bank in Pittsburgh, the Rand-McNally in Chicago, the State National Bank in Little Rock, the Walker Bank in Salt Lake City, the Henry in Portland, the Clark in Los Angeles, and in uncounted residences throughout the United States.

These examples speak more eloquently than words of the advantages which Birch offers in the way of beauty, service, and economy, in modern woodwork. Did it not possess these desirable attributes, its use would not be so universal nor its popularity so great.

Where to Get Birch

Birch trim, panels, doors or flooring can be obtained from every manufacturer of interior woodwork. Should any builder have difficulty in getting the material specified, or in securing satisfactory stains, he will be promptly referred to reliable sources of supply upon application to

**The Rotary Birch Club,
Oshkosh, Wisconsin.**

**The Northern Hemlock & Hardwood
Manufacturers Association,
Oshkosh, Wisconsin.**

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